THE COLEOPTERIST'S NEWSLETTER

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It was hoped that in this issue the reports of the two Field Meetings appear. Alas, no. Doubtless the participants are at this very moment avidly making the most of the fine summer weather as, as we all do, have put off report writing (one of our most onerous and boring tasks) until winter.

I have heard that the Radnorshire meeting at least was a huge success with an extra 30 species of Carabidae being added to the County List and a host of very significant finds of species in other families as well as the Carabidae. I hope the promised reports will appear in either the next or the February 1987 issue. J.C.

Anthocomus fasciatus (L.) - a colour variety. On July 11th 1986 at Childswickham, Worcestershire, I collected a female Anthocomus fasciatus with the normally red central areas of the elytra cream passing to buff laterally. The apical red areas are sharply bicoloured cream and red.
P.F. Whitehead, Moor Leys, Little Comberton, Pershore, Worcs.

An open verdict ? On June 30th 1986 at Broadway, Worcs., I encountered a Melolontha melolontha (L.) minus its right wing, right elytron, abdominal tergites and entire abdominal contents, with the exception of the reproductive organs. It was being cleaned out by the ants Myrmica rubra (L.) which had begun to remove the contents of the thorax. Despite all this, the beetle was not only still alive, but endeavouring to walk. In this exceptionally good "Cockchafer year" the evidence suggested that it was disabled probably by a cat, and thus unable to escape the surgical attention of the ants. P.F.W., Little Comberton.

I have recently had the rare opportunity to make observations on the behaviour of two mutually interacting ground beetles. June 15th 1986 was a hot sunny day, and Pterostichus cupreus L. ran abundantly amongst standing corn on the footslopes of Bredon Hill at Elmley Castle, Worcestershire.

One male was carrying a dead tipulid Limnophila ferruginea (Mg.). A second male arrived and began to pull vigourously at the fly's wing. The first individual released its hold, approached its rival at speed, and pinned it to the ground, anchoring it between pronotum and elytra. This was repeated three times, the rightful owner always regaining a strong 'toothhold' on the fly. The unwelcome guest then scuttled away with no hesitation, leaving the fly's righful owner to retreat with it down a soil dessication crack.

P.F.W., Little Comberton.

Flights of Fancy ? Although I have little knowledge of the literature that relates to flying beetles, I should welcome the opportunity to make a brief comment.

The Spring flights of beetles are well known, often comprising characteristic species, but one wonders to what extent these beetles are masters of their own destiny. For those more or less transported by terrestrially generated warm air, there can be few advantages if they finally ditch in the sea or reservoirs.

On many Mediterranean shores one encounters a buprestid Capnodis tenebricosa (Ol.) which could justly be termed obligatorily suicidal. It is found so persistently in the sea - can it have marine larvae ?!! To gain some understanding of flying beetles it helps to become acquainted with, and somehow sample from small areas. In south Worcestershire, the first major flights usually come in the second half of April, some of the species continuing into June. In some cases however, these flights are on narrow fronts, or possibly even in clearly defined lines.

June 2nd 1986 was notably still and humid, and a small area only of one field was inundated by flying Philonthus during the afternoon. Six or seven at a time landed on me, and fifty or sixty passed in front of my eyes. Over half were Philonthus politus L., but P.varius Gyll., Quedius schatzmayeri Grid., and Q.nitidipennis Stph. were also involved. This does not of course mean that June 2nd will be hailed as National Philonthus Day, because on one day 14 days later, this same area was visited by small numbers of flying beetles never previously noted in the area, and including several rarities.

Conversely, one may regard Omosita that home-in with laser-like precision to my occasional carrion traps, but which are never found getting there; and Aphodius, some of which must be so embarrassed by their life-style that they creep from one cow-pat to another under cover of night!

P.F.W., Little Comberton

An avid collector of beetles. On April 29th 1986 at Bow Wood, Upton Snodsbury, Worcestershire, it became apparent that an old Apodemus (Wood Mouse) hoard of hazelnuts, acorns and hawthorn seeds mixed with the humified heartwood of an ancient (ca 275 year old) oak pollard also contained beetle fragments. All were comminuted skeletal fragments sheared by the rodents incisors. The following list is based on the minimum number of individuals in a 1.5kg sample:

Carabus monilis F.	3
C. nemoralis Müll.	9
C. violaceus L.	5
Pterostichus cupreus L.	1
P. melanarius Ill.	6
Abax parallelepipedus P&M	3
Calathus fuscipes Gz.	1
Staphylinus olens L.	1
Nicrophorus humator F.	
Silpha atrata L.	2
Geotrupes stercorosus Scriba	1
Melanotus erythropus (Gm.)	1

The fauna is typically that of a woodland with clearings or open ground nearby, but it is not the fauna of the existing habitat. I have only one recent sighting of Carabus monilis in Worcestershire, and although the status of C.nemoralis is curiously disparate in England, in the region of these findings, it is now very localised.

The sample was isolated in the crutch of the trunk 2m up and postdates the major episode of trunk decay; an age of 30-50 years is a possibility only, that allows it to predate modern land use practice. The identification of Geotrupes-sized elytra has eluded me. If anyone recognises a microsculpture of confluent small ocellations (punctured circles) bearing long brown hairs, and with very widely spaced fine striae, I should be glad to hear.

P.F.W., Little Comberton.

Four new Biological Record Centre beetle Schemes. The Monks Wood meeting saw the launch of four new beetle recording schemes and the re-launch of another. Keith Alexander is taking on the Cantharoidea and Buprestoidea; Paul Hyman the "orthoceras" weevils (= Nemorynchidae to Apionidae); Roger Key a hotch-potch of small families including all of the Cleroidea and the "heteromerous" Cucujoidea (= Mycetophagidae to Aderidae, excluding the Scraptiidae and Mordellidae (coward! - J.C.)); and Dave Shirt the Scarabaeoidea. Peter Twinn has taken over the Cerambycidae.

Introductory newsletters for all five schemes, including some notes on critical species, and recording cards are all available from Brian Eversham, B.R.C., Monks Wood Experimental Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE17 2LS. An overview of all the B.R.C. schemes for Coleoptera is included with this newsletter (as opposed to Newsletter - J.C.)

Roger Key, N.C.C., Peterborough.

Possible association of Glischrochilus hortensis with ants. Has anyone else ever observed any interaction between Glischrochilus hortensis and any species of ant. On 20th April, in the afternoon of the Sunday of the Monks Wood meeting, Andy Foster, Keith Alexander and myself were searching for myrmecophilus beetles in nests of Formica rufa in Bedford Purieus Wood. A number of unhealthy elms had been cut down by one of the nests and on a number of these curious dark rings were visible from a distance. On close inspection these proved to be individuals of Glischrochilus hortensis surrounded and apparently being "attended" by large numbers of workers of F.rufa. No interchange of any substances was apparent between ants

and beetles, some individuals being nearly "buried" in huge numbers of ants. Beetles extricated proved to be totally unharmed. Donisthorpe (1924, Guests of British Ants) makes no mention of Glischrochilus. Perhaps both the ants and beetles were feeding at sap, although none was seen. Any suggestions ? (Perhaps they'd eaten it - JC) R.KEY, NCC, Peterbro'

DR ZOLTAN KASZAB As many readers will have heard Dr Kaszab the authority on Tenebrionidae died after a sudden heart attack at his home on April 4th 1986. Sitting in his armchair reading a newspaper his life ended within a minute without suffering; he had always desired a quick painless death. Dr Kaszab was 71. He retired as Director of the Hungarian Natural History Museum in October 1985.

Personally my contacts with Dr Kaszab were irregular, but no matter how trivial a full and prompt answer was always forthcoming. He was a most generous correspondent and I am one of the many amateur Coleopterists to have benefitted from such contacts. His loss to entomology will be immeasurable.

Full obituaries will appear in the entomological press.

J.C.

(Received just in time:) Radnor Meeting, 6-8th June 1986. The weather was fine, countryside marvellous, beetles abundant and a merry and profitable time was had by all. Lots of 'goodies' turned up, including several new to Wales. I am still awaiting returns from about 25 of the 33 paticipants (hint, hint). There should be a full account with species lists in the next "Newsletter". R.Key, NCC, Peterborough.